

VZCZCXRO6494  
OO RUEHBZ RUEH DU RUEHJO RUEHMR RUEHRN  
DE RUEHSB #0673 2211217  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
O 081217Z AUG 08  
FM AMEMBASSY HARARE  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3270  
INFO RUCNSAD/SOUTHERN AF DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY COLLECTIVE  
RUEHAR/AMEMBASSY ACCRA 2205  
RUEHDS/AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA 2324  
RUEHRL/AMEMBASSY BERLIN 0856  
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 1601  
RUEHDK/AMEMBASSY DAKAR 1959  
RUEHKM/AMEMBASSY KAMPALA 2380  
RUEHNR/AMEMBASSY NAIROBI 4811  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC  
RUZEJAA/JAC MOLESWORTH RAF MOLESWORTH UK  
RHMFISS/EUCOM POLAD VAIHINGEN GE  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC  
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 1473  
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHDC

UNCLAS HARARE 000673

SENSITIVE  
SIPDIS

AF/S FOR G. GARLAND  
ADDIS ABABA FOR USAU  
ADDIS ABABA FOR ACSS  
STATE PASS TO USAID FOR E. LOKEN AND L. DOBBINS  
STATE PASS TO NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR B. PITTMAN

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [ASEC](#) [PHUM](#) [KDEM](#) [ZI](#)  
SUBJECT: LITTLE EVIDENCE OF AGRICULTURAL CHEMICAL USE ON  
POLITICAL VICTIMS

REF: HARARE 652

11. (SBU) Despite media reports that the pesticide paraquat has been used by ZANU-PF militia on political victims, there is no scientific evidence to substantiate the claims. Paraquat, an herbicide used on tobacco plantations in Zimbabwe, has reportedly been used in two ways: forced ingestion or on the skin, particularly in beatings.

12. (SBU) In a briefing with diplomats on July 22, Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) Social Welfare Secretary, Kerry Kay said that they believed there had been 30 incidents involving beatings with sticks soaked in paraquat. There are other reports of MDC supporters being forced to ingest paraquat or other poisons. But Dr. Frances Lovemore, the Counseling Services Unit (CSU) director, told diplomats on August 5 that there is no way to corroborate these allegations. Zimbabwe does not have the equipment to perform the necessary toxicology tests. She also noted that paraquat is expensive, not easily obtainable, and not widely used in rural areas. While it is possible that agricultural chemicals have been used in torture cases, she said it is unlikely to have occurred on a large scale. Dr. Lovemore's opinion substantiates the assessment by Dr. Douglas Gwatidzo, director of Zimbabwe Doctors for Human Rights, in a conversation with poloff in early July.

13. (SBU) COMMENT: Reports of agricultural chemicals to poison or torture political victims are disturbing. While they may have been used in isolated cases, usage in cases of political violence does not appear to have been widespread or systematic. END COMMENT.

MCCEE